

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Status of Claims:

No claims are currently being added or cancelled.

Claims 16 and 18 are currently being amended.

This amendment and reply amends claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claims remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1-4 and 16-19 are now pending in this application, whereby claims 5-15 have been withdrawn from consideration.

Indication of Allowable Subject Matter:

Applicant appreciates the indication of allowable subject matter made in the Office Action with respect to claims 1-4.

Request for Entry of After-final Amendment and Reply:

It is respectfully requested that this after-final amendment and reply be considered and entered, since it is believed to place this application in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections – Prior Art:

In the Office Action, claims 16-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,596,881 to Wilson. This rejection is traversed with respect to presently pending claims 16-19, for at least the reasons given below.

As recited in presently pending independent claims 16 and 18, the deformed portion is inclined and curved inwardly toward the step portion such that the outer face of the deformed portion is formed in a convex shape, and the inner face of the deformed portion abuts and is engaged with the second member. As seen best in Figure 4 of Wilson, his deformed portion 74 is not curved inwardly towards his step portion 63 such that the inner face of the deformed portion abuts and is engaged with a second member 44.

Accordingly, presently pending independent claims 16 and 18 are not anticipated by Wilson.

Conclusion:

Since all of the issues raised in the Office Action have been addressed in this Amendment and Reply, Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of allowance is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

Date February 9, 2007

FOLEY & LARDNER LLP
Customer Number: 22428
Telephone: (202) 945-6162
Facsimile: (202) 672-5399

By Phillip J. Articola

Pavan K. Agarwal
Registration No. 40,888

Phillip J. Articola
Registration No. 38,819